DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C. #140 DECEMBER 22, 1976
ALINA ZERANSKI

CALL FOR HELP? CALL FOR ACTION
(INSERTS AVAILABLE IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C. -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE NATIONS CAPITAL -- BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS TIME. TODAY, A REPORT PREPARED BY ALINA ZERANSKI ON A VISIT TO A RADIO STATION PROVIDING A FREE PUBLIC SERVICE.

NARR: SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, A BLIND WOMAN WAS REFUSED ENTRANCE TO A RESTAURANT IN WASHINGTON BECAUSE OF HER SEEING EYE DOG. UPSET AND HURT, SHE CALLED FOR HELP TO A VOLUNTEER ACTION SERVICE, SUPPORTED BY A LOCAL RADIO STATION. HER CASE BECAME A NEWS ITEM, AND THE DETAILS WERE MADE PUBLIC. WITH NEW AWARENESS, THE RESTAURANT OWNER APOLOGIZED, AND IT BECAME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE THAT THE LAW ALLOWS SEEING EYE DOGS IN RESTAURANTS AND INDEED, IN ALL PUBLIC BUILDINGS. THIS WAS AN EARLY SUCCESS STORY FOR A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION NAMED CALLED FOR ACTION. THE VOLUNTEER DIRECTOR OF THE CALL FOR ACTION UNIT SPONSORED BY WTOP RADIO STATION IN WASHINGTON, IS MRS. SHIRLEY ROOKER.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- ROOKER

"CALL FOR ACTION IS A SERVICE ESTABLISHED BY LOCAL RADIO AND TV STATIONS TO HELP PEOPLE, TO HELP LISTENERS WHO HAVE PROBLEMS. THE PROBLEMS CAN RANGE FROM ANYTHING SUCH AS A PERSON WHO WANTS TO FIND A NURSING HOME FOR AN ELDERLY RELATIVE, TO FINDING ADEQUATE HOUSING FOR A FAMILY. WITH ANY PROBLEM THAT PEOPLE HAVE, THEY CAN CALL US, AND WE'LL TRY TO HELP THEM. WE HAVE TELEPHONES ESTABLISHED, THEY ARE OPEN EVERY DAY, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY FROM ELEVEN UNTIL ONE O'CLOCK."

NARR: CALL FOR ACTION WAS OPENED IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ONLY LAST SEPTEMBER, AND THERE ARE ALREADY ABOUT THIRTY NEW CASES EACH DAY. IT TOOK FIVE MONTHS TO PREPARE A CAREFULLY RESEARCHED DIRECTORY OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL WHICH EACH OF THE VOLUNTEERS ANSWERING THE FOUR TELEPHONES HAS ON THE DESK. THIS SERVICE IS ADVERTISED BY THE SPONSORING RADIO STATION SEVERAL TIMES EVERY DAY. AN ASSOCIATED TV CHANNEL ALSO HAS OCCASIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS. AGAIN MRS. ROOKER.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- ROOKER

"CALL FOR ACTION WAS STARTED IN NEW YORK CITY IN 1963 BY MRS. ELLEN STRAUS WHOSE HUSBAND PETER STRAUS OWNED WMCA RADIO STATION IN NEW YORK CITY. HER GOAL WAS TO USE THE POWER OF THE MEDIA COMPILED WITH THE POWER OF THE VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE A SERVICE TO THE LISTENERS OF WMCA. AND SINCE THAT TIME, IT HAS GROWN FROM THE ONE STATION IN NEW YORK CITY AND WE HAVE NOW 42 CALL FOR ACTIONS AROUND THE COUNTRY."

NARR: THOSE 42 CALL FOR ACTION UNITS ARE STAFFED BY 2,500 VOLUNTEERS WHO ASSISTED 300,000 PEOPLE LAST YEAR. EACH VOLUNTEER WORKS ONCE A WEEK FOR ABOUT FOUR HOURS. OUTSIDE OF ANSWERING THE PHONE, THEY MAKE FOLLOW-UP CALLS, OR IF NECESSARY, THEY TAKE ACTION THEMSELVES. MRS. ROOKER, WHO WAS ONCE A COMPUTER PROGRAMMING ANALYST, IS NOW A HOUSE-WIFE WITH A TEN YEAR OLD SON. SHE IS HAPPY TO BE OF SERVICE TO HER COMMUNITY AND SPENDS ABOUT TWENTY HOURS EACH WEEK AS VOLUNTEER DIRECTOR.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- ROOKER

"WE HAVE ABOUT FORTY VOLUNTEERS. THESE VOLUNTEERS COME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE. WE HAVE A NURSE WHO WORKS PART TIME, WORKING WITH US, WITH A PHYSICAL THERAPIST. WE HAVE SEVERAL RETIRED PEOPLE. WE HAVE ONE MAN WHO WORKS,..WHO WAS A FORMER GOVERNMENT EDITOR. HE IS WORKING WITH US IN

TAPE: (CONT) A CAPACITY OF EDITING OUR RESOURCE BOOK. SO, WE HAVE A VARIETY OF VOLUNTEERS. OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT COMES FROM THE RADIO STATION ITSELF. THEY PROVIDE US WITH THE TELEPHONES AND ALL THE MATERIAL THINGS THAT WE NEED. OF COURSE, THE PEOPLE POWER COMES FROM VOLUNTEERS, SINCE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US ARE VOLUNTEERS WHO GIVE OUR SERVICES. WE ALSO HAVE OUR NATIONAL OFFICE OF CALL FOR ACTION, IT RECEIVES MONEY FROM PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS AND FUND RAISING EFFORTS."

NARR: WHEN THE SERVICE WAS FIRST ADVERTISED IN WASHINGTON, THERE WAS A TREMENDOUS RESPONSE FROM THE COMMUNITY. PEOPLE CALLED NOT JUST WITH PROBLEMS, BUT OFFERING HELP. ONE OF THEM WAS MRS. LEANORE MCMALLEN WHO FINDS IT VERY EXCITING AND REWARDING TO BE ABLE TO HELP SO MANY INDIVIDUALS IN DISTRESS.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- MCMALLEN

"WE'D GET A PHONE CALL AND DO AS MUCH AS WE CAN. FIRST OF ALL, WE'LL TELL THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON THAT HAS CALLED UP, WE'D TRY TO ADVISE THEM. WE WANT THEM TO DO AS MUCH OF IT AS THEY CAN THEMSELVES. IF THEY HAVE DONE EVERYTHING THAT WE HAVE TOLD THEM TO DO, FOR INSTANCE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH CERTAIN ORGANIZATION OR SOMETHING, IF THEY HAVE DONE IT AND HAD NO LUCK, WE'LL CALL THEM BACK, POSSIBLY IN TWO WEEKS TO SEE WHAT HAS HAPPENED. OR, WE USUALLY WANT THEM TO CALL US AND LET US KNOW THAT THEY HAVE HAD NO LUCK WITH THAT PARTICULAR ORGANIZATION THAT WE HAD REFERRED THEM TO. THEN WE'D REFER THEM AGAIN. IF NOT, WE'D STEP IN AND ACT FOR AN OMBUDSMEN FOR THEM."

NARR: CALL FOR ACTION DOESN'T DEAL MUCH WITH PERSONAL PROBLEMS. MORE OFTEN THERE ARE LEGAL QUESTIONS WHICH HAVE TO BE REFERRED TO SPECIAL AGENCIES OR TO LAWYERS. BUT THE MAJORITY OF CASES ARE CONSUMER AND ENVIRONMENT PROBLEMS. HERE, THE FEAR OF ADVERSE PUBLICITY THROUGH THE MEDIA WORKS LIKE MAGIC. TAKE, FOR INSTANCE, THE PHYSICIAN WHO CANNOT GET PARTS NECESSARY TO REPAIR HIS FURNACE SOONER THAN IN TWO WEEKS. BUT CALL FOR ACTION EXPLAINS THAT A DOCTOR'S

NARR: (CONT) OFFICE WITHOUT HEAT IS AN EMERGENCY AND IT IS FIXED IMMEDIATELY. STREET LIGHTS ARE REPLACED IN FORGOTTEN CORNERS, POT HOLES IN THE STREETS ARE FILLED MORE QUICKLY. CAR DEALERS BECOME EAGER TO CLEAR THEIR REPUTATION. MAIL ORDER BUSINESSES UNABLE TO SUPPLY MERCHANDISE IN A REASONABLE TIME ARE ASKED TO REFUND MONEY AND QUICKLY DO THAT. IN ALL, CALL FOR ACTION IS EFFECTIVE IN 80 PERCENT OF ITS CASES...A GOOD ILLUSTRATION OF HOW PROBLEMS CAN BE SOLVED WITH A LITTLE VOLUNTEER EFFORT AND A LOT OF INFORMATION.

ANNCR: THIS HAS BEEN DATELINE: WASHINGTON, -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED STATES, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS TIME. TODAY, YOU HEARD ABOUT CALL FOR ACTION.

NEXT _____ ANOTHER DATELINE.

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